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Michael John Branson

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IBM CORPORATION, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW
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3605 HIGHWAY 52 NORTH
ROCHESTER, MN 55901-7829

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BHATIA, AJAY M

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The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte MICHAEL JOHN BRANSON, MELISSA SUE FICHTINGER,
LEAH ELIZABETH HAUSE, GREGORY RICHARD HINTERMEISTER,
ERIK DUANE LINDBERT, DIANE ELAINE OLSON,
NEELA SHARAD PATEL, DEVAUGHN LAWRENCE RACKHAM,
and BRENT GORDEN TANG

Appeal 2008-0109
Application 10/078,605
Technology Center 2100

Decided: May 2, 2008

Before JAMES D. THOMAS, JOSEPH L. DIXON,
and JAY P. LUCAS, *Administrative Patent Judges*.

THOMAS, *Administrative Patent Judge*.

DECISION ON APPEAL

This is an appeal under 35 U.S.C § 134(a) from the Examiner's final rejection of claims 1, 2, and 4 through 30. We have jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. 6(b).

As best representative of the disclosed and claimed invention,
representative independent claim 1 is reproduced below:

1. A method of maintaining a database for managing a process of a plurality of transactions through two or more applications in a business transaction environment, each application having at least one associated log file, and each transaction being defined by one or more steps configured to complete the transaction, the method comprising:

accessing each of the respective associated log files, wherein at least two of the associated log files are of different formats;

for each new log entry recorded in the respective associated log file being accessed:

(i) determining whether the new log entry comprises one or more required fields using mapping rules that describe a location and format of at least the one or more required fields in the respective associated log file;

(ii) extracting information from the new log entry only if the new log entry comprises the one or more required fields; and

(iii) storing the information as a plurality of transactions records to a database.

The following references are relied on by the Examiner:

Matson	US 6,668,254 B2	Dec. 23, 2003
		(Filing date December 21, 2000)
Landry ¹	US 5,649,117	Jul. 15, 1997

¹ The bottom of page 2 of the Answer inadvertently incorrectly lists the patent number of Landry as 5,949,117 instead of 5,649,117.

Claims 1, 2, and 4 through 30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. As evidence of obviousness, the Examiner relies upon Matson in view of Landry.

Rather than repeat verbatim the positions of the Appellants and the Examiner, reference is made to the Brief (no Reply Brief has been filed) for the Appellants' positions, and to the Answer for the Examiner's positions.

OPINION

For the reasons set forth by the Examiner in the Answer, as expanded upon here, we sustain the rejection of all claims on appeal under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Pages 11 through 14 of the Brief argue independent claims 1, 21, and 29 collectively for their commonly recited features recited in the respective "determining" clause that includes the feature of mapping rules and the respective "extracting" clause. Significantly, the bulk of Appellants' arguments in the Brief relate to Matson and does not argue that Matson and Landry are not properly combinable within 35 U.S.C. § 103. Page 14 of the Brief also does not contest what the Examiner relies upon in Landry.

The sentence bridging pages 10 and 11 of the Brief states "*Matson* teaches using a differential analysis to determine if the current downloaded dataset includes new data, and parsing (extracting) every field from the download dataset to a standard format. . . ." Thus, Appellants appear to analogize the feature of differential analysis such as in element 205 in figure 2 and/or element 217 in this figure to the claimed determining clause as well as the parsing teachings at column 5 to the claimed extracting feature of the claims on appeal. As to the position that Matson does not have distinct steps

to perform the determining and extraction features of the claims, Appellants own positions recognizing what Matson teaches appear to answer there own question. Moreover, the statement is made at column 5, lines 22 and 23 that the “conversion to XML 211 is an automatic process and may be performed after the simple differential analysis 205,” thus indicating that the subsequently discussed parsing teachings of this XML data teaches separate steps to perform the alleged two distinct operations claimed. The claimed separate steps are shown in Matson’s figure 2.

As Appellants’ discussion in the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12 of the Brief recognizes, the parsing feature of column 5, includes the capability of parsing as to required fields that include location and formatting information for each of the potentially different types and formats of supplier data received from plural, different suppliers. This is indicated at least in the discussion at column 5, lines 30 through 35. This feature directly relates to the mapping rules discussion set forth at pages 13 and 14 of the Brief relating to Appellants’ stated third argument. As the Examiner has noted with respect to this argument at the middle of page 11 of the Answer, Appellants’ definition of the word “parsing” is of limited scope, and it is not limited to grammatical structural analysis. An artisan’s understanding of the actual discussion regarding parsing in Matson is much more expansive. To the extent argued and claimed, and by Appellants’ own understanding of the teachings of Matson, the actual functionality associated with the parsing functions in Matson make them necessarily present (inherent) even though

different words in Matson are used to describe them. The concept of mapping rules with respect to required fields for each data log is consistent in the reference to the manner in which it is claimed.

From an artisan's understanding of the teachings and showings referenced at columns 4 through 6 of Matson, the artisan may well construe the broadly defined determining clause to be met by the simple differential analysis block 205 in figure 2 and/or along with the supplier XML parsing functionality in element 215 which is discussed at column 5. Moreover, the claimed extracting functionality, which is conditioned upon "only if" a new log entry comprises one or more required fields, is met by the differential analysis block 217 which yields or extracts separate bodies of data such as identical products 219 through analysis statistics data structures 229 at the bottom of figure 2 and discussed generally beginning at the top of column 6.

According to Matson's method and system of importing data, figure 2 relates to a general preprocessing functionality. More detailed discussions of actual insertions and updating, both of which appear to relate to concepts of adding new data files and adding dataset entries for existing data files, are illustrated in figures 3 and 4, respectively. Moreover, the concept of mapping formats is discussed per se as a part of the prior art at column 1 and the Summary of The Invention at the middle of column 2. Overall, as well noted by the Examiner, the conversion to a common XML data formatting approach permits mapping different data formats into a common set of formatted information. The business-to-business (B2B) and on-line shopping service discussions at columns 1 and 2 relate to the transactional

nature of the claimed subject matter. This feature is embellished upon according to the modifications proposed and discussed at column 12 of Matson.

In view of the foregoing, the decision of the Examiner rejecting claims 1, 2, and 4 through 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is affirmed since Appellants have not provided evidence to us of any error in the Examiner's positions with respect to this rejection.

No time period for taking any subsequent action in connection with this appeal may be extended under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). See 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(1)(iv).

AFFIRMED

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